N. Robbins

F
129
T8B9

TROY FOR FIFTY YEARS.

MR. BUEL'S LECTURE

BEFORE

THE YOUNG MEN'S ASSOCIATION OF THE CITY OF TROY,

DECEMBER 21, 1840.

Class F128
Book .T3B9

TROY FOR FIFTY YEARS:

A LECTURE,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE YOUNG MEN'S ASSOCIATION OF THE CITY OF TROY,

On the 21st *December*, 1840.

BY DAVID BUEL, JUN.

4

Published at the request of the Executive Committee of the Association.

TROY, N. Y.:

N. TUTTLE, PRINTER, CCXXV. RIVER-ST[illegible] T.

1841.

F129
.T8B9

1 cat HHR 23h24

Rooms of the Troy Young Men's Association, }
December 21, 1840. }

Dear Sir:

At a meeting of the Executive Committee last evening, it was unanimously

"*Resolved*, That the Committee on Lectures tender the thanks of the Association to David Buel, Jun., Esq., for the able and highly interesting Lecture delivered by him before the Association, on the evening of Monday, the 21st inst., and request a copy for publication."

The undersigned, believing that the Address, which was listened to with so much gratification, may prove interesting and instructive in perusal, would feel greatly obliged by your compliance with this request.

Your obedient servants,

CHARLES H. READ,
JACOB L. VAN SCHOONHOVEN,
ABRAM B. OLIN,
URI GILBERT,
BENJAMIN STARBUCK,
GEORGE WILLIAM WRIGHT,
} *Committee on Lectures.*

To David Buel, Jun., Esq., Troy.

Troy, *December* 28, 1840.

Gentlemen:

Your note of the 21th instant, containing a resolution of the Executive Committee of the Young Men's Association, requesting for publication a copy of the Lecture delivered by me before the Association, on the evening of the 21st inst., was duly received. Although the Lecture was prepared without any expectation on my part that its publication would be called for, I shall feel it to be my duty to comply with the request of the Committee, by furnishing a copy to be at their disposal.

I remain with much esteem,

Your obedient servant,

DAVID BUEL, Jun.

Messrs. C. H. Read and others, Committee, &c.

TROY FOR FIFTY YEARS.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Association:

It seems to be an instinct of our nature to look back upon the scenes of our earlier life, and retrace the steps by which our bodies and minds have advanced to maturity, from the period of infancy and childhood. A kindred feeling leads us very naturally to trace from their small beginnings, the places in which our lot has been cast. Our country furnishes more instances than any other of towns and cities springing into existence, and attaining great importance within the generation of their founders. Our highest antiquity in this great Republic, reaches back but little more than two centuries. The cities which can claim even that relative antiquity, are very few. Among the number, is the neighboring city of Albany. History informs us, "that (perhaps) in 1614 the first rude fort was erected (probably) on the southern point of Manhattan Island," and "that in the next year (1615) the settlement at Albany began on an island just below the present city." There is some reason to believe that the beautiful plateau which now forms the site of our own city, was explored in 1609 by the great Navigator, who, first of Europeans, discovered the noble River whose silvery stream

will waft his name to unborn ages. We learn from the authentic records of his voyage, that Hudson "went sounding his way above the Highlands, till at last the Crescent, (the ship in which he made his voyage), had sailed some miles beyond the city of Hudson, and a boat had advanced a little beyond Albany." This boat probably ascended to the rapids which commenced at the northerly bounds of this city, where ordinary tides spent their force and the navigation was interrupted. For above a century after Hudson's memorable voyage, the territory now embracing the site of the city, probably formed part of the hunting grounds of the Mohawk Indians.

In the year 1720, a grant of 490 acres, extending along the Hudson from the Poestenkill to Meadow Creek, and comprehending the original allotments of the city, was made in fee by the proprietor of the Manor of Rensselaerwyck to Derick Van Derheyden at the annual rent of three bushels and three pecks of wheat and four fat fowls. This plain and the first range of hills were possessed by the grantee and his decendants, and some small portions of it cultivated as a farm. Mr. Elijah Adams, a venerable citizen now 78 years old, has resided in the immediate vicinity since he was 17 years old. When he first knew the Van Derheyden lands, there were strips or patches within the present site of the city, known as the corn grounds of the Indians. Some years after Mr. Adams came here to reside, a full grown bear swam across the Hudson, landed near the Upper Ferry; and being pursued ran among the oaks with which

the plain was covered, and ascended a pine tree near the building now occupied as the Rensselaer Institute, from which he was brought down by Mr. Adams' rifle. It does not appear that this spot had attracted much attention until three or four years after the termination of the Revolutionary War, when one or two individuals from the Eastern States, observing its favorable situation, persuaded the Dutch proprietors of the soil to lay out a portion of their lands into town lots. When the first surveys were made, the place was not known by any fixed name. A letter written by one of the earliest adventurers* in the fall of 1786, is dated at "Ferry Hook." Several letters written by the same person between the months of April and September, in the year 1787, are dated at "Rensselaerwyck," a town which embraced one third of the whole county. In the fall of 1787, the name "Van Derheyden," as a designation of the embryo village, began to be used by the settlers; and that name is found in the leases of lots granted at that period.

Lansingburgh was then a village of considerable size and commercial importance. In Carey's edition of Guthrie's Geography, published in 1795, it was noticed in the following terms: "Lansingburgh, formerly called the "New City," stands on the East side of the Hudson, nine miles north of Albany. It is a very flourishing place, pleasantly situated on a plain at the foot of a hill." At that period, Troy had not been noticed by our geographers. The circumstances in

* Mr. Benjamin Covell.

which Troy was placed at its beginning, seemed not propitious to its growth. But a few miles below was the ancient city of Albany, which for several generations had been the mart of trade for the entire region around us. Above, within half the distance, was the "New City," already a thrifty village, settled by men of enterprise. Hitherto towns most favorably situated had had a tardy growth.

At the period when the settlement of Troy commenced, the population of Albany probably did not amount to 4000; although it had been incorporated as a city more than a century. But the establishment of our Federal Government in 1789, gave a new impulse to the country. The spirit of enterprise spread rapidly over our land. The "New State," as Vermont was then called, was speedily occupied by immigrants from the older Eastern States. The enterprising sons of New England, sagacious to discover, and prompt to occupy positions which promised commercial advantages, readily saw that a town established at the head of natural, ordinary navigation on the banks of the Hudson, would, after some struggle, outstrip the "New City," which had been improvidently located above the rapids. Nor did those sagacious men believe that a town so favorably situated at the distance of six miles from Albany, would be wholly overshadowed by that ancient city. The earliest surveys and allotments were made between the years 1786 and 1790. The middle allotment, of which Mr. Jacob D. Van Derheyden, (known in his life time as the Patroon of Troy), was the pro-

prietor, comprehended the territory between Division and Grand Division-streets. The southerly allotment, of which Matthise Van Derheyden was the proprietor, extended from Division-street to the Poestenkill. The northerly allotment, of which Jacob I. Van Derheyden was proprietor, was north of Grand Division-street. The farm house of the Patroon was on ground now occupied by the National Hotel, corner of River and Ferry-streets. That of Matthise still stands at the corner of River and Division-streets—but its Gothic roof and other characteristics of its Dutch original, have been made to give place to more modern forms. The adventurers, who had persuaded the quiet occupants of the Van Derheyden farm houses to lay out part of their farms into village lots, erected one or two slight buildings in the year 1786. The earliest settler was Mr. Stephen Ashley, who came here shortly after the close of the Revolutionary War, and kept a tavern for two or three years in the farm house of Matthise Van Derheyden.

No dwelling house was erected by immigrants before the year 1787. In the month of August of that year, Dr. Samuel Gale, the elder, immigrated from Guilford, Connecticut, with his family, with the intention of settling at Lansingburgh; but owing to the difficulty of obtaining a dwelling house there, he stopped at the late Jacob D. Van Derheyden's, and determined to make this the place of his residence. He soon set about the erection of a dwelling house and store a little south of the Upper Ferry—which

were completed in the following season. He was for several years the principal physician, and a prominent man in the enterprise of building up the new village.

An intelligent and respectable citizen, who immigrated to this place in the spring of 1789, states that at that time, five small stores and about a dozen dwelling houses had been erected. The appellation of Van Derheyden was in the latter part of the year, (1789) changed for a more classic name. Its existence as a village may be properly dated from the year 1790: since which, a period of fifty years has recently elapsed. In the brief review which I shall take of the progress of Troy, I propose to divide the whole time of its existence into periods of ten years each. The first of which will extend from the year 1790 to 1800. This was a time of deep interest and intense effort for the settlers.

At the commencement of the decade, they were very few in number, and possessed but little substance; but they were men of courage and activity. Among the first settlers, who subsequently distinguished themselves by their enterprise, may be mentioned Messrs. Stephen Ashley, Benjamin Covell, Samuel Gale, Ephraim Morgan, John Boardman, Benjamin Smith, Philip Heartt, Anthony Goodspeed, Mahlon Taylor, Ebenezer Wilson, and Samuel Wilson. These pioneers and their early associates, were compelled to embark in a struggle with the then formidable "New City," which was sustained with great spirit, but at first with doubtful success. Before

Troy had a name, that village had attained considerable size, and had become the usual mart of trade for a considerable section of the "New State" and the eastern towns of this county. A respectable and enterprising population, possessed of considerable capital, were there collected. The attempt to build up a rival village at Van Derheyden's ferry, had a little of temerity in its appearance; but the adventurers, though few in numbers, had explored their ground. They were men of shrewd minds. They saw that water power here abounded—and that the River navigation to this point was easy. They judged that with its natural advantages, their enterprise could not fail. Shortly after the commencement of their settlement, an event occurred which was favorable to its success.

In 1791, this county was detached from Albany. The question, where the public buildings of the new county should be erected, was agitated with great warmth. In this early contest, Troy prevailed. The first court house was erected here in 1793, and the first jail in the following year. The influential men among the early settlers were supporters of the institutions of religion. While yet too few in number, to erect a temple devoted to public worship, or to secure the ministrations of a clergyman, they were accustomed to assemble, at first in a store and subsequently in a school house, on the Sabbath, at the sound of a conkshell, and listen to sermons read by the elder Dr. Gale, or the late Col. Pawling. The last mentioned gentleman, after having served his

country in the Revolutionary War with such fidelity as to have secured the approbation of Washington, immigrated from Esopus with Col. Ten Eyck, another Revolutionary patriot. These gentlemen went at first to the "New City," but soon removed to Troy and enrolled themselves with the early settlers. In 1791, by the united effort of the inhabitants, yet too few to gratify their denominational predilections, the frame of a house for public worship was erected. In the following year, (1792), the building was enclosed and was soon occupied for worship, although in an unfinished state. This building became the first edifice of the Presbyterian congregation. It was enlarged about twenty-five years after its erection—and a large part of my audience well remember its appearance and situation, in the centre of our now beautiful Park, opposite the Court House. During the entire period of the first decade, and about half of the second, this was the only edifice erected for the purpose of public worship. The pastoral services of the venerable Dr. Coe, during the period which I am now reviewing, were equally divided between Troy and Lansingburgh; his residence being in the latter village.

The trade of Troy, during the period under review, was greatly sustained by the purchase, storing and shipment of grain. Wheat was then a staple article of produce of the country on both sides of the Hudson, the valley of the Mohawk, the shores of Lake Champlain, and of the whole region which found its market on the Hudson. The first settlers

constructed their store-houses for the reception of grain, fronting on River-street extending towards the river, with spacious lofts, so that the bags of wheat brought in wagons and sleighs could be hoisted by tackles and placed upon the scales, and when weighed deposited in the bins. From the store-houses it was conveyed by spouts on board the vessels. By this means cartage was saved.

The numerous water privileges in the vicinity soon began to be occupied. The enterprising Mahlon Taylor erected at an early period, a flouring mill of spacious dimensions, for that day, on the Poestenkill. Within a short time afterwards, another was erected by the late Moses Vail, near Ida falls—and a third by Mr. Witbeck, near the mouth of the Wynantskill. Thus the foundation was laid for carrying on a branch of business, which has ever since formed an important item in the commerce of Troy.

As Troy united advantages for the reception, transportation and manufacture of grain, greater than were possessed by Albany or Lansingburgh, it early took the lead in those branches. Troy, from its commencement, engaged also in the lumber trade, in which it has ever since largely participated. During the period under consideration, pot and pearl ashes were brought here in large quantities, from Vermont and the northern counties of this state. Butter and cheese have always constituted a considerable item of the business of Troy. The first newspaper was printed by Luther Pratt, in 1796; it was called the Farmer's Oracle. It was

not continued long. After some interval, the Northern Budget was established by Robert Moffit, in the year 1798, and has continued ever since, with a slight variation in the name. I anticipate what in strict chronological order belongs to the second decade, in noticing two more of the earlier newspaper establishments: The Troy Gazette, which was established by Thomas Collier in 1802, and the Farmers Register, by Francis Adancourt, in 1807. During this first decade, a respectable number of frame stores of pretty large dimensions, but constructed without much regard to taste, were erected at intervals along the westerly side of River-street, principally between Ferry and Albany-streets. The dwellings were mostly of small size, and slightly built. The first brick dwelling house was erected by James Spencer, in the year 1795, on the triangular space included between River, Second and Albany-streets, and which, in the original plan of the city, was laid out into building lots. The block of ill-shaped buildings erected upon it, was removed above twenty years ago, under the authority of a special act of the Legislature, and the area converted into a public place, since called, with some departure from mathematical precision, Washington Square. In the year 1796, four brick dwelling houses were erected, which are still standing, viz., No. 31 First-street, Nos. 20 and 22 Second-street, and the building on the corner of River and Washington-streets. Several brick dwelling houses were erected in the three following years, but it is believed that no brick store was built

during the last century. The commerce of Troy during the period under review, partook more of the barter kind than it has since done. The capital embarked in trade was small; no Bank had been established, and much of the produce brought to market was received in store to be shipped to New York, and sold for the account of the owners. But the character of the first race of business men, supplied to some extent the want of capital. Their unbending integrity and untiring industry, early gained for the business men of Troy, a reputation which established their credit on an enduring basis. Their habits of business and economy, inspired confidence in the city and country. Their hours of relaxation were few, and their devotion to business intense. The places of business were open at sunrise and never closed before nine o'clock P. M., and in the seasons of active business, the sound of the tackles might be heard to a much later hour. Nothing which could divert attention from business—not even a book, was permitted to be in use about the stores of some of the most vigilant of our early merchants.

The first settlers were unostentatious in their manners and dress; simple, frugal and regular in their mode of living. They were alive to the commercial interests of the village, and earnest in advancing its prosperity. The navigation of the River was improved; new roads were constructed, and encouragement was extended to men of enterprise to settle here. A generous emulation without jealousy, prevailed among the business men. They supported

each other's credit, and readily united in measures calculated to promote the interest of the village. The immigrations from the Eastern States during this decade, furnished the chief source of its increase. It is difficult now to obtain any accurate statement of the progressive increase of the population during this period. A respectable lady remembers, that during the prevalence of the small pox in the year 1794, Dr. Gale and Dr. John Loudon ascertained that the number of inhabitants in the village, was between four and five hundred. At the close of the century, it probably amounted to 1100 or 1200. At that time Albany contained about 6000, and Lansingburgh about 2000. But Troy, although its population was small, had established a reputation which insured its future growth. The groves of oaks and pines, which covered a large part of its site at the beginning of the decade, had been mostly cleared away, and the orchards which had occupied a considerable space in the vicinity of the Van Derheyden farm houses, were reduced to a small number of trees. The stores were all on River-street, and the dwellings mostly on that and First-street, a few on Second-street, and still fewer thinly scattered along Third, Hill and Division-streets.

II. During the early part of the second decade, extending from 1800 to 1810, a new impulse was given to the village, by the removal to it from Lansingburgh, of a number of the most active and substantial business men. This accession of population, capital and enterprise, had an inspiriting influence

upon Troy, while the immigration from the Eastward, and more especially from Connecticut, continued to increase. The march of improvement was greatly accelerated. A considerable number of brick buildings, both stores and dwellings, were erected. The flouring establishments were increased, and a large number of vessels were employed.

In 1801, the Farmers Bank was organized, and became a very important auxiliary to the commerce of the village—although its first location, midway between Lansingburgh and Troy, was not a little inconvenient. Such a location could have no other origin but the feelings of rivalry and jealousy, which existed between the two villages at that period. The increase of the population during the first five years of the second decade, was such as to render necessary the erection of more edifices for religious worship. An Episcopal Church, of small dimensions of brick, was erected in 1804; some years subsequently it was enlarged, and is now known as St. John's Church. It is gratifying to add, that during the last season it has been surmounted by a spire of remarkably fine proportions, which may justly be ranked among the best specimens of architecture in the city. In the year 1805, the Baptist Church in Third-street was erected, and was subsequently enlarged. The first Methodist house of worship in State-street, was erected in 1809, and the Friends meeting house in Fourth-street, in the year 1810. In 1806 the population of the village had swelled to nearly 3000.

For a period of about seventeen years, the infant

village had enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity. It was now in common with most commercial places in our country, to experience a severe reverse. Hitherto this young nation had, with but few interruptions, carried on a most profitable foreign commerce during the sanguinary wars, in which Europe had been engaged. At length the belligerent powers determined that neutral nations should no longer carry on the most legitimate neutral trade with their respective enemies. Our government, in order to preserve the property and protect the rights of the citizens, were compelled to adopt defensive and coercive, although peaceable measures. A general embargo on our shipping was laid in December, 1807, which was continued about eighteen months. During that period, the trade of Troy was nearly annihilated. Its streets, which in the seasons of business had been previously thronged with wagons and sleighs loaded with produce, now exhibited, almost constantly, the solemn stillness of the Sabbath. The vessels lay dismantled at the wharves, and a general palsy seemed to have seized on the business community. Trade forsook its natural and wonted channels, and much of the business which had usually been transacted at Troy, was transferred to Montreal and Quebec. In the spring of 1809, the embargo gave place to the non-intercourse, or more properly, the non-importation policy. This afforded considerable relief to our commercial towns. Although the British provinces still participated in the trade which naturally belonged to Troy, this modification of the

restrictive policy, greatly meliorated its condition. Troy slowly recovered from its torpor, and at the close of the period under review, had attained a population of nearly 4000. But the increase was chiefly during the first six years of the decade. During the continuance of the embargo, there was probably no increase. Just before the commencement of the restrictive system, the advance in the price of real estate had been such, as in a small degree to create an appetite for speculation in village lots. Previously, no such tendency had existed, and lots had generally been taken up or purchased only by persons who intended to improve them. But the embargo extinguished the fever of lot speculation, and for many subsequent years there was no recurrence of the paroxism.

III. At the commencement of the third decade, (extending from 1810 to 1820), the commercial difficulties still continued. The government had so far modified our restrictive regulations, as to offer to the belligerent powers, the alternative of commercial intercourse with the nation which should withdraw its offensive edicts. The sagacious Napoleon accepted the offered boon, and gave notice of the repeal of his Berlin and Milan decrees; upon which our commercial intercourse with France was resumed in November, 1810. The activity of trade was considerably revived, and Troy participated in its benefits. In the year 1811 the Bank of Troy was established, which afforded increased facilities to our commerce.

After the removal of the embargo, an indirect trade

with England and her colonies was carried on to a large extent under the flags of other neutral powers, and by means of neutral ports and through the British provinces adjoining our territory. But the war declared against Great Britain in 1812, produced great changes. The industry and enterprise of the country was forced into new channels, and developed new resources. Manufacturing establishments sprung up with great rapidity through the northern and middle states; several important establishments were made on the streams in this vicinity. During the continuance of the war, the manufactories yielded a large profit; our internal commerce was greatly increased, and new sources of wealth seemed to open upon us. But the return of peace was a chilling blast to the hopes of the manufacturer. Vast importations of British goods were made, and a large commercial debt was created. In 1816 and 1817, our manufacturing establishments were paralized, and for several years most of them remained prostrate. Amidst these vicissitudes the prosperity of Troy was sustained by the unflinching energy of its business men. In 1816 its population, including the out wards, was nearly 5000; in that year it was incorporated as a city. The municipal organization had previously undergone several changes. The law which gave Troy a legal existence as a village, was passed in 1794. Limited powers were conferred upon the freeholders. The trustees were merely executive officers to see the ordinances passed by the inhabitants, carried into effect. The government

of the village was, in truth, a pure democracy. In 1798 the village was incorporated, and limited powers conferred on five trustees chosen by the freeholders; but to the legal voters, the power of levying taxes was still reserved. The powers of the trustees were enlarged in 1801, but the authority of levying taxes still remained in the legal voters. In 1805, the charter was revised. The village was divided into four wards; a trustee was chosen in each ward, and a president appointed by the Governor and Council of Appointment. The trustees were authorized, in addition to their other powers, to raise by tax, 1500 dollars annually, to defray the expense of supporting a night watch, and lighting the streets, and the further sum of 1000 dollars to defray contingent expenses. The village charter enacted in 1805, continued with but little alteration until it was superseded by the city organization.

In 1820 the population was 5262, the increase in ten years having been but about 1300, the ratio of increase was much smaller than it had been during the previous decade. The price of unimproved real estate from 1809 to 1819, was not so high as in the years 1806 and 1807. But although the population advanced in a diminished ratio, much was done during the third decade for the promotion of the future prosperity of Troy. The streets were generally pitched and graded, and uniformity in the location of buildings, in reference to the line of the streets and alleys, was enforced. No town in the country at so early a period of its existence, had

succeeded better in enforcing regulations calculated to improve its appearance and promote cleanliness, health and comfort. Troy has so long enjoyed the comfort and benefits of having its streets well pitched and drained and graded, that we can now hardly appreciate the importance of the early regulations—which it required much energy in the police of an infant village to adopt and enforce,—and for which we are mainly indebted to the venerable Edward Tylee, who was the president of the village for several years after the adoption of the revised village charter of 1805. While these improvements were in progress, Mr. Tylee's perseverance and energy in carrying them forward, rendered him somewhat unpopular; but the city owe to him a lasting debt of gratitude. It will not be unsuitable in this connexion, to record the names of the several persons who, as presidents of the village, or mayors of the city, have successively presided over our municipal institutions. Mr. Tylee was succeeded by Col. Anthony Ten Eyck, Col. Derick Lane, and Col. Albert Pawling —the last named gentleman was our first mayor— to whom succeeded successively, Mr. Esaias Warren, Mr. Samuel M'Coun, Mr. George Tibbits, Mr. Richard P. Hart, and the present mayor, Mr. Jonas C. Heartt. It is proper to remark, that all those gentlemen had been merchants, and actively engaged in promoting the prosperity of Troy, and all of them were distinguished for integrity and practical good sense.

IV. The fourth decade was marked by deeply

important events to Troy. On the 20th June, 1820, a fire broke out in a shed on the alley in rear of First-street, which in a few hours consumed the wealthiest and most important section of the city; not only buildings, but goods and other personal property to a vast amount, were destroyed. The fire swept away all the buildings on the west side of First-street, from the third door north of Congress-street, to its junction with River-street, except the Bank of Troy. Also all the buildings on both sides of River-street, from a point about one hundred feet north of Congress-street, to the store of Larned & Corning, No. 227 River-street, opposite the Troy House. The shock was astounding, and for a few days despondency was visible on the countenances of our citizens. But their wonted energy soon rallied. In a few weeks the foundations of numerous buildings were laid, and before the close of the following season the desolations were repaired, and Troy rose from its ashes, beautified in its appearace, invigorated in its enterprise, and the value of its property increased. The city was soon to be called to test the effect upon its interest of the change in transportation, which the completion of the navigable communication between the Lakes and the Atlantic ocean would produce. Some of our citizens feared, lest the trade of the north and west would thenceforth avoid its accustomed markets and be wafted past Troy to the great commercial emporium. Those who had more thoroughly considered the subject, felt

no such apprehension. One especially,* whose venerable form still cheers us with his presence, and whose luminous mind yet sheds its mellowed rays among us, who had long applied his sagacious powers to the developement of plans for the accomplishment of the great enterprise, steadily predicted, that the completion of the canals would not fail to make Troy more prosperous. I cannot omit this occasion, of expressing the firm conviction, that posterity will acknowledge as deep a debt of gratitude to our distinguished fellow citizen, as to any one individual who was engaged in accomplishing the splendid enterprise of connecting by navigable communications, the Atlantic ocean and the Lakes, for his well digested financial measures, which insured the early and economical construction of those great public works. In 1823, the connexion between the Lakes and the Hudson was completed, the effect of which, on all the relations of business at the terminating points of the canals, was electric. Hitherto, Troy had advanced with moderate steps. Its progress was now greatly accelerated. Its population in five years, from 1820 to 1825, swelled from 5262 to 7859, making an increase of 2597. In the five following years, the population arose to 11,556; making the increase of the whole period, from 1820 to 1830, about 120 per cent. Although this ratio of increase did not equal that of Utica, Rochester and Buffalo during the same period, it exceeded that of any other town in the state. The increase of its business and wealth,

* George Tibbits, Esq.

was greater than that of its population. The completion of the great channels of internal communication, produced a striking change in the methods of transacting business. Our great business street was deserted by the throngs of sleighs and wagons, and the bustle of business transferred to the wharves. Strangers passing through the street, wondered at the quiet which appeared in front of the spacious warehouses. During the period now under consideration, the wharves and other accommodations for heavy business operations, were greatly extended; the general appearance of the city was much improved by the erection of a great number of tasteful and substantial private buildings, while the improvement in the structure and appearance of the public edifices erected during this period, was still more striking. The churches and other public edifices built previously to 1820, had been erected at a cheap rate, and exhibited but little taste in their construction. Near the close of the decade, St. Paul's church was erected of durable materials, and in an appropriate style of architecture. During the same period, the Second Presbyterian church was erected, and the first Methodist church re-constructed in a neat and substantial manner. During the closing year of this period, (1829), the buildings were numbered, and the first city directory published.

V. The accumulation of wealth, the increase of population, and the progress of improvement, which had been so considerable during the fourth decade, were still more remarkable during the earlier years

of that which has been recently completed. A new court house, two beautiful Presbyterian churches, the Universalist church and a second Methodist church, and two elegant banking houses, were erected in a style creditable to the taste of the city. Our public grounds were inclosed with beautiful and substantial iron fences, and every part of the city drained by capacious sewers; while its health, and comfort, and safety, were greatly promoted by the construction of its aqueduct—which will long remain an additional monument of the sagacity and perseverance of the distinguished citizen, who presided over the councils of the city while that great work was being executed. In addition to the improvements which have been mentioned, we should not omit to notice that during the last year, the foundations were laid of two spacious market houses, now nearly completed, which are constructed of durable materials upon a plan which combines public accommodation with neatness and good taste. During the period now under review, the commercial world has passed through unparalleled vicissitudes, vibrating between excessive prosperity and ruinous depression. During the first six years, the flood gates of wealth seemed to be widely opened. Manufacturing and commercial enterprise had acquired an accelerated impulse. The products of the soil and of the forest, of the loom and the forge, of the workshop and the ocean, found ready and profitable markets. Our foreign commerce spread its sails to every wind, and penetrated every sea. Our cities along the seaboard

were scenes of bustling activity, and the prairies and forests of the vast West, teemed with adventurous immigrants. Railroads were projected, and constructed with surprising rapidity. The surplus capital of Europe seemed to be at our disposal, to carry into execution the most magnificent and stupendous schemes of improvement. The unlimited credit of our merchants enabled them to supply the rapidly increasing demands for merchandize of every sort. Banking institutions and joint stock associations multiplied in endless variety. Vast investments were made or projected for exploring the depths of the ocean in quest of sperm and whale, and for ransacking the bowels of the earth in search of the precious metals. Our city could not be unaffected during such a period. In five years its population rose to 16,959, making an increase of 5403, between 1830 and 1835. The progress of improvement outstripped even that of its increase of population. Many buildings of large dimensions and of great elegance were erected. Numerous plans for expensive improvements were projected, and not a few of them executed. Hitherto, the citizens of Troy, following the footsteps of those who laid the foundation of its prosperity, had, to a great degree, escaped the malady of rioting in imaginary wealth, and had been wisely content with a gradual increase, the fruits of industry and economy. At a period when visionary schemes had deluded multitudes in other places to embark in rash and ruinous speculations, the citizens of Troy escaped the delusion, and as our city had

nearly been exempt from the ravages of Asiatic cholera, although within the line of its desolating march, so did the recent epidemic of speculation but lightly scathe us. This exemption is more worthy of our notice, when we consider that the contagion is so subtle, that it often seizes the strong man and binds him in chains, selecting for its victims the intelligent and the shrewd, as well as the weak and the credulous. When the golden dream fastens on the imagination, the powers of the understanding, whatever may be their native strength, are inadequate to break up the delusion until the paroxism has run its course. This extraordinary delusion has happily left but few marks of its ravages among our sober population. If any of our citizens were inclined for a season to embark in visionary schemes, the revulsions of 1837 and 1839, have doubtless convinced them that it is not wise to make haste to be rich.

The onward progress of the city has indeed been checked by the commercial tornadoes which have been sweeping the land, and a heavy hand has for a while been laid upon our plans of public improvement. But we may gather some useful lessons from these reverses. They may lead us to estimate more highly the maxims of prudence which influenced the early settlers of Troy, in their pursuit of wealth and their schemes of improvement. They may also induce the rising generation of business men among us, to act more thoroughly in accordance with that safe and sound maxim in political economy, that industry and economy are the only reliable sources

of wealth for cities or individuals. The credit of the mercantile community has been severely tried, and its capital has been sifted by the recent revulsions. But the gloom which has overspread the commercial world will be dissipated, and trade will return to its wonted channels. The ability of Troy to sustain the recurrence of the severest commercial revulsions, has been tested. The advantages of her local situation, improved as they will be by the sagacity, energy and perseverance of her business men, will insure her onward progress and prosperity. It is true that she must persevere in that course of untiring vigilance and activity in which her prosperity was cradled; for she has still to run the race with powerful competitors, and much remains to be done to preserve her relative advantages. The advance of improvements all around, renders it necessary to direct our efforts and apply our resources to some objects which our relative position have made indispensable. Railroad communications with the West and the East, which shall keep pace with those now in progress for connecting neighboring places with the Atlantic and the Lakes, cannot longer be delayed without the loss of our reputation for enterprise, and without hazarding our relative standing and prosperity.

Our citizens are too sagacious not to see their position; and I feel confident they will promptly put in operation the measures which will insure the execution of the requisite improvements. To effect these objects, the main reliance must be upon our own resources and our own energies. These have

always been the chief reliance of the citizens of Troy. Its growth has not been so rapid as some of its sister cities in the west, but its progress has been steady and healthful. At the close of fifty years from its origin, it contains a population of nearly twenty thousand; has fifteen edifices for religious worship, employs a dozen large flouring mills, possesses numerous manufacturing establishments, has a banking capital amounting to a million and a half of dollars, employs more than a hundred vessels, and two steam towing boat lines in its transportation business on the Hudson,* and possesses an amount of active commercial capital, which, in the hands of its enterprising business men, is sufficient to enable them to sustain the high commercial character of Troy. [*Vide note p.* 36.]

In reviewing the progress and actual state of our city, we are constrained to admit, that some deeply important interests have been, if not entirely neglected, yet thrown far in the back ground. The efforts hitherto made for the promotion of education, and the cultivation of science, literature and the fine arts, have been very inadequate. The early settlers of Troy were too much occupied in business pursuits, and two intently engaged in competition with formidable rivals, to allow them leisure to attend to concerns which seemed less pressing. The schools in the early days of Troy, were generally feebly support-

* The first transportation line of sloops was established by Messrs. Pattison & Hart, in the year in which the canals were opened to the Hudson; and in the following season (1824) a line of towing boats, with steam power, was established by the same firm.

ed, and the teachers ill qualified to instruct. Whilst the citizens engaged earnestly in enterprises calculated to advance the business interest of the village, the important concerns of education were strangely unheeded. And even when Troy had outstripped Lansingburgh in population, wealth and commercial importance, the latter remained much in advance in respect to the concerns of education, science and literature. And even now the public institutions of education in that village, are placed on a footing of greater permanency than those in our city. It has long been a subject of reproach, that we had scarcely a public institution of a literary character, worthy to be pointed out to a stranger visiting our city. The Female Seminary should be excepted from the remark. Under the persevering efforts of its enterprising founder, it long since attained a high character, which I am sure it will not lose under the management of its present accomplished principal. The government of the city have been amply rewarded for the fostering care and patronage which they have bestowed on this institution. The Rensselaer Institute has long been favorably known, and its merits appreciated throughout our country, and has not been unnoticed in Europe. But the credit of sustaining that institution, belongs exclusively to its late benevolent patron; and I regret that we are not at liberty to consider it permanently located among us. The opportunity which was presented a few years since of securing the establishment of an important college here, was lost, I believe, because the citizens of Troy did not

give to the subject the full consideration which its importance demanded. Within the last three years, considerable improvement in our public common schools has been made, and two durable and convenient edifices for their accommodation have been erected. The want of institutions properly endowed and furnished with suitable accommodations for the instruction of boys, in the higher branches of science and classical learning, has in years past compelled our citizens to send their sons abroad or place them in schools conducted by individuals, which, for want of proper support, are often fluctuating. Recently, the Episcopal Institute having been incorporated and placed under a highly respectable board of trustees, is acquiring reputation as a classical institution. The Troy Academy, too, it is hoped, will, under the impulse which has recently been given to it, grow in favor with our citizens, and deserve and receive a more extended patronage. But we must not indulge the dream, that any seminary of education will acquire a reputation creditable to the city, until liberally endowed and furnished, and provided with accommodations, tasteful, and ample for the reception of numerous pupils. In some other respects we are still more deficient than in regard to institutions of education.

Let me ask, my fellow citizens, where are our public libraries? The Troy library is indeed venerable in years. Its foundation was laid by some of our earlier settlers; but it existed for many years almost unknown and unread, and but for the kind-

ness of your Association in giving it a resting place in your rooms, it could hardly have found a shelter in its desolation. When I listened, two years since, to the appeal made by the president of your Association, in the introductory lecture for the season, I felt persuaded that the reproach of having not one respectable collection of books in the city, would soon be wiped away. No enterprise, gentlemen, I am sure, demands from you more untiring efforts, than that of establishing an extensive and well chosen library ; such a library as you would feel gratified to exhibit to literary strangers. It seems to be left to you, gentlemen, to devise the means by which this community shall be moved in this enterprise. The formation of such a library, would not only be very important in its direct purposes, but could not fail to lead to the founding of other affiliated institutions for promoting the cause of science, literature, and the arts ; the combined influence of which would open to the citizens new sources of enjoyment and usefulness, and greatly elevate the character of the city. It has been well remarked by an eminent jurist, that "the sciences are of a sociable disposition, and flourish best in the neighborhood of each other;" a remark equally applicable to the institutions for the promotion of learning and the arts. Hitherto the literary institutions in the venerable neighboring city, have thrown our own far in the shade. Her academy edifice, although erected many years since, and when the population and wealth of Albany was much less than Troy now possesses, has long been ad-

mired for the durability of its structure, and the chasteness and elegance of its architectural design; and the literary institution within its walls stands deservedly high in the comparison with the seminaries of our country. The Albany city library has, for half a century, been fostered by her eminent citizens and attained great respectability. The Female Academy is a monument of the munificence of its founders, and has long been the pride of the citizens. A liberal support has been extended to her Museum, her Atheneum and her Institute, and more recently to her Medical College. The munificent patronage extended to these and her other literary and scientific institutions, demands our admiration, and may I not add, invites our generous emulation! The acquisitions of commerce and manufactures, when employed in promoting the sciences and the arts, bring to their patrons the most desirable distinction. In modern cities, the highest achievements in the useful and ornamental arts have been made under commercial patronage. Even in the middle ages, the finest specimens of architecture, the best models of painting and sculpture, and the most splendid collections of books, were called into existence by the commercial communities of Venice, Bilboa, Naples and Florence. At this moment both in Europe and our own country, the architect, the painter, the statuary and the author, must seek his principal patronage in commercial communities. It is time that our city should take some decisive steps in rearing institutions calculated to improve the intellect, cultivate the taste, and afford

occupation and enjoyment to the minds of those who now inhabit the city, and of those who shall come after us. The beauty and elegance of our streets and dwellings, excite the attention of strangers. Let its citizens combine their energy, and make it a repository of those intellectual treasures which will render it attractive to the scholar and the admirers of the arts, and which will furnish to its inhabitants the facilities for cultivating their minds, improving their taste, increasing their rational sources of enjoyment, and enlarging their sphere of usefulness.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY.

The following Statistical Summary of the Commercial and Manufacturing Establishments, is condensed from the statements of the Assistant Marshal for taking the Census.

	No. of Establishments.	Capital invested.	Value of articles produced.	No. of men employed.
I. COMMERCIAL.				
Mercantile houses engaged in foreign trade,	34	2,674,621		
Commission houses,	23			
Retail Stores,	279	645,013		
Lumber yards and establishments,	14	206,000		18
Internal transportation,		1,161,100		1,159
II. MANUFACTURES.				
Cast iron,	4	279,000		
Bar iron,	8			
Cotton, including dying and printing establishments, *	9	352,200	253,200	
Wool—Woolen Factory and three Fulling Mills,	4	50,000	30,000	
Leather—Tanneries,	7	91,000	220,050	64
Other leather factories & factories of articles of leather,	40	99,550		
Paper,	3	88,000	80,000	
Mixed manufactories,		25,300	30,500	23
Machinery,			17,000	11
Hardware, Cutlery, Gunnery, &c.,			933,500	138
Manufactures of articles made of the precious metals and metalic substances,		278,200	99,200	80
Bricks and Lime,			17,400	18
Musical instruments,		6,000	10,000	10
Hats, Caps, Bonnets, &c.,		46,700	117,393	151
Soap and Candles,		19,000		18
Distilled and fermented Liquors,	4	110,000		
Printing and Binding,	6	23,200		48
Coaches and other Carriages and Wagons,		170,850		131
Cordage, (Factory located West Troy),	1	40,000	80,000	40
Mills—13 Grist mills and 2 Saw mills,	15	374,000	1,171,266	59
Vessels,		45,000	109,000	73
Furniture,			79,000	
All other manufactories not before enumerated,		218,135	411,500	

* N. B. This seems, from the Marshal's statement, to include several Cotton Factories situate out of the city, but owned principally in Troy.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 014 221 111 7